

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SANTIA 10766 092109Z

71

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 10766

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, CI

SUBJECT: CHILEAN CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS MAKE SHIFTS IN PARTY
LEADERSHIP

REF: SANTIAGO A-147

1. CHILEAN CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS (PDC) HAVE SHUFFLED LEADERSHIP
AS AN INTERIM STEP IN CONTINUING EFFORTS TO UNITE THE PARTY.
SO FAR THE PDC IS DEEPIING THE CHANGES QUIET, BUT WORD IS GETTING
AROUND. ALL OBSERVERS EXPECT THE GOC'S NEW REGULATIONS AIMED
AT ENFORCEING THE POLITICAL RECESS WILL INCLUDE PROVISIONS STRIPPING
PARTY DIRECTORS OF AUTHORITY. THE PDC MAY IN ADDITION BE LINING
UP ANOTHER SHADOW GROUP TO KEEP THE PARTY FUNCTIONING UNDER
SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES (REFAIR).

2. DURING THE LAST WEEK OF OCTOBER, THE PDC'S INNER CIRCLE
FINALLY REACHED ACCOMMODATION WITH ITS "ESTABLISHMENT LEFT"
FACTION (IGNACIO PALMA, BENJAMIN PRADO, ANDRES AYLWIN, ETC.).
THE SMALL LEFT WING HELD NO PARTY LEADERSHIP POSITIONS AT THE
TIME OF THE 1973 COUP, AFTER WHICH PARTY LEADERSHIP WAS EFFECTIVELY
FROZEN. THE PDC LEFT WING IN CHILE AGREED TO THE PARTY'S BROAD
STRATEGY VIS-A-VIS THE JUNTA, BUT BECAME INCREASINGLY UNHAPPY
ABOUT ITS LACK OF REPRESENTATION IN THE LEADERSHIP. NOW THE MUCH-
BUFFETED PATRICIO AYLWIN HAS FINALLY RESIGNED AS PARTY PRESIDENT;
ANDRES ZALDIVAR, A MORE DYNAMIC MAINSTREAM PDCER, REPLACED HIM
AND WILL BE IN FORMAL CHARGE WITH THREE OTHERS. SENIOR PARTY
VICE-PRESIDENT OSWALDO OLGUIN ALSO RESIGNED -- SUPPOSEDLY BECAUSE
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PAGE 02 SANTIA 10766 092109Z

HE THINKS HE CAN PLAY A MORE ACTIVE ROLE UNENCUMBERED BY PARTY

OFFICE. TOMAS REYES, AN AGEING MEMBER OF PALM'S CLIQUE, HAS BEEN ADDED. SO HAS WARHORSE JOSE DE GREGORIO ARCE, WHO TRADITIONALLY ENJOYED GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE LEFT WING - HE BECOMES SECRETARY GENERAL. EX-SECRETARY GENERAL BECOMES VICE PRESIDENT. RAFAEL MORENO REMAINS AS PARTY SECRETARY.

3. COMMENT: EVER SINCE THE DISAPPOINTING (TO THE PDC) REACTION TO EDUARDO FREI'S ANTI-GOVERNMENT PAMPHLET OF DECEMBER 1975, THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS HAVE BEEN VERY MUCH ON THE DEFENSIVE. PATRICIO AYLWIN SLIPPED INTO SUCH DESPONDENCY EARLY THIS YEAR THAT HE WAS EFFECTIVELY OUT OF COMBAT UNTIL FAIRLY RECENTLY. CRITICIZED BY THE PARTY'S SMALL LEFT AND RIGHT WINGS AND INTIMIDATED BY THE GOC, IT WAS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME UNTIL HE STEPPED DOWN.

4. LEGALLY, OF COURSE, UNDER THE POLITICAL RECESS THE PDC CANNOT CHOOSE NEW OFFICERS WITHOUT GOVERNMENT CONCURRENCE, AND IT DOES NOT WANT TO ASK FOR THAT. ACTUALLY THE PDC HAS SO LITTLE MANEUVERING ROOM THAT THE CHANGES MAY HAVE LITTLE IMPORTANCE. ON THE OTHER HAND, IN ORDER TO BRING THE PARTY TOGETHER, AND FACED WITH THE PAUCITY OF CONCRETE RESULTS FROM ITS DEMOCRATIC FRONT NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PIR (LUIS BOSSAY'S GROUP), THE PDC MAY NOW BE CONSIDERING HOW IT COULD USE COMMUNIST AND SOCIALIST SUPPORT WITHOUT COMPROMISING ITS ANTI-MARXIST POSITION AS A DEMOCRATIC "THIRD ALTERNATIVE" BETWEEN THE JUNTA AND THE UP. IF SO RAPPROCHEMENT WITH PALMA'S FACTION MIGHT BE THE FIRST STEP TOWARD ACCEPTING SUPPORT FROM THE CHILEAN LEFT.

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